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CAMP-NOTES.

LOST IN THE JUNGLE.*

'You were nigh lost to-day,' said Vansten to me one night. 'I don't know as any of us, barring the Kingman, would have found his way back more cool an' clever than you did. It needs right-down pluck to keep the wits together when one's lost.'

'This was not the first time with me,' I said; 'but I don't know that the experience becomes more agreeable by repetition.'

'There's no man could describe what it is to feel lost who hadn't tried it for himself,' said Beasley. 'I've been lost in a many ways: once on the Texan prairie; once on the Pampas; twice on the gold mountains past Libertad; an' I'd blush to know how many times on Schnaps; but I never were lost in green-wood yet, an' thank God! for that's an experience I kind o' don't seem to value. It's scaring enough when you can see yer way before an' behind, as on them lonely mountains of Chontales; but there's few would keep their senses twenty-four hours in the forest.'

'As to keeping one's senses, I don't speak,' said Vansten; 'but I've kept my life in for seventeen days behind Castillo Viejo, an' in that time I hadn't a bite to eat, barring piñuela leaves an' "pig-apples." Seventeen days they tell me it were, an' no doubt their reckoning was right; I weren't likely to be mindful. When I was gettin' spry agin, it somewhiles seemed to ha' been ten years, an' somewhiles only a few hours. I've heard doctors say a man couldn't live more'n a week without food, but law bless yer! them sumphs argue an' argue among themselves for years, going on what they call internal evidence an' sound reason, when they might have fixed the matter in a minute by asking us, who've made their experiments willye nillye. I guess we four here round this fire could pass most doctors a key or two they

aren't likely to find about their parlours, not yet to discover by internal evidence. I lived on piñuela pith an' pig-apples seventeen days, an' the scientific folk in New York told me to my face it were downright impossible. Says the boss of them: "Piñuela pith of no wild kind air capable of supportin' life by itself, an' of pig-apples you say you could scarce find six in a day." "Tarnal thunder," says I, "I did it!" "Must be mistaken, my good man; you must have been deceived." "Wal!" I said, "I don't mostly like to call a man bad in his own house, but if I was to meet you in an asylum for incurable idiots, I should express no rude astonishment." "An' if I were providentially to encounter you," said he grinning, "arm in arm with the late Ananias and Sapphira his wife, I should call it quite a family party!" So I pitied him, an' left, for he wur a poor little cuss to handle.'

'Wal! I should a kind o' risen against the notion myself, if I hadn't heard of it before,' said Beasley. 'You was the man, was you? There must be a likely pile of twist in your inside, if you lived on piñuelas for seventeen days.* But I've heard of that tale, an' you was the man? I thought the ants had gnawed yer nose off. What's the story?'

'It's not much to tell,' said Vansten, after a long pull at the Schnaps bottle, 'but it were awful enough to feel. I was in my first voyage, an' almost the earliest passage across Nicaragua. We embarked at New York, some fifty of us, steamed to Greytown, an' there chartered every bongo about the place to take us up the river. It was a reg'lar little fleet; an' a fine time we had as far as Castillo—the liveliest time ever I see. There was lashin's of drink aboard, an' cards, an' some of 'em made a very pretty plunder going up. We were a wild lot, boys, that's a fact! Them was the days for adventure on the Transit! It's lively now sometimes, but the San Juan is like

* The reader is reminded that the stories told in 'Camp Notes' are positively true in fact, although some slight alterations have been made in localities, for various reasons.

* There are many sorts of piñuela—otherwise called wild pine-apple—but all have tough fibres in the leaf, which are made into twine. The pig-apple is a pretty yellow fruit growing on a thick liana. Peccaries, javalinos, and savalinos are all passionately fond of it.

the river of the New Jerusalem beside of what it once was. Half the party was allurs down in the horrors, an' the other half was up in the same; from one minute to another, a man could not call his life his own; every pistol was filed in the lock, so that it nigh went off by looking at it! The fighting was right-down free: we lost three men between Greytown and Castillo.*

'But was there no attempt to keep order? The natives must have suffered badly in those wild times,' I asked.

'The Greasers daren't say much now-a-days, I guess, when the miners are on the river, an' they were even higher-handed in the days before Walker. Besides, your high-moral Queen of England undertook the police business of the San Juan at that time, an' a happy mess she made of it! There was one policeman at Greytown to keep order among a thousand San Francisco rowdies, an' that lonely official was allurs down with fever. The English seemed to think their eternal Union-jack was a warrant to discount the millennium. No! no one meddled much with us in those days, an' I don't think we can fairly bluster now. Where's the man who shot those two brothers under the balcony of the *Union Hotel*, last trip? You saw that murder only ten days ago, an' I tell you the man as did it'll be found in New York when the passengers are discharged next month. We reached Castillo at sundown, an' lay quiet all night at the foot of the rapids. In the morning, the bongos were hauled up; but it was a long job, for one only could be taken at a time, an' that empty. We loafed about on the bank watching the boats, an' lending a hand now an' then, but it was slow work, an' eternal hot, so most of us soon fell to poker an' monté in the shade. I saw there was little chance of getting up for the next three hours, so I strolled off by myself, for I was young, an' new to the tropics, an' natur' kind o' interested me. I'd walked half-an-hour maybe through the bush, admiring the flowers, an' leaves, an' birds, when suddintly a tortus-rabbit [armadillo] crossed in front of my track, feeding an' rooting about. He was nigh as big as a sheep, the heaviest sort, in fact, an' I'd heard what good eating such are; so I thought I'd go back quietly, borrow a rifle, an' come for him agin.

'Accordingly, I turned in my track, an' slipped through the bush, mighty clever, as I thought, without scaring the cretur. Maybe an hundred yards I'd got along, going as innocent as an addled egg, when suddintly I came to a big rubber-tree, scored about like a cork-screw. "Guess I didn't pass that before," thought I, an' looked round. I tried right an' I tried left, but couldn't strike the trail, for there was no trail to strike! I'd gone into that unpeopled forest as if there was roads an' sign-boards in it. I hadn't blazed a tree nor taken sights, an' if ever a man deserved to be lost from right-down carelessness an' folly, I was that man. But it's an awful penalty to pay, sir, for a bit of boyish stupidity. I wandered right an' left round the rubber-tree until them thoughts came in my mind, an' then my heart turned sickly. "Let's try back on the rabbit," I said out loud, an' my voice sounded strange an' lonely in the hot stillness of the wood. So I tried back. I went out, as I thought, on the trail I'd come by; but after half-an-hour I'd not reached the glade. "Lost! Lost!" kept buzzing in my ears; an' I prayed. I

fought to keep cool; but that was impossible for a boy like me. After a while the mad fit came on, an' I dashed through the bush shouting an' raving till my throat bled. The sweat poured down like a cold rain, an' I knew my wits were going. Every instant I was down headlong, but I held on still, until the fit passed away, leaving me weak an' helpless. "Good Lord!" I prayed then, "let me get back to the rubber-tree." Somehow the thought was in me I'd be saved if I could get to any spot I knew. More'n two hours I was creeping through the bush, an' at last, by simple chance, I reached the trunk, an' sat down there.

'Lord! lord! it were a lovely scene around. The day was just at noon, an' the straight sun-rays stook down through the leaves, an' lit them up like gold. The flowers was out, such as could grow in that green twilight, "foxgloves," an' orchids, an' such; but the ferns an' the shrubs were more beautiful than flowers. There was a tall tree-fern overagainst me, crowned with feathery leaves, that shone transparent as green glass. On the other side was a wild banana, bearing a crimson mass of flowers. The climbing moss fell as a pale water-fall from the tree-tops, an' the long lianas hung down like brown cords. One of them dropped just above my head, naked an' leafless, but at the tip of it glittered a crimson flower, like a jewel hanging from the sky. The air was so hot, an' green, an' still, except for a faint quiver which from time to time ran through the forest, that one might have thought the world was dead, an' buried in those piles of leaves. While the stupid fit was on, I sat an' watched a little army of ants, each carrying a round green leaf upraised as a flag, that hurried along their deep-worn road. A checker of sunlight fell on that brown pathway, an' I mind well how the small creturs sparkled in crossing it. After a while, the dead hot stillness was broken by the chuckle an' croaking of two parrots that fluttered in a tree above me; but with a rustle of leaves they flew sleepily away.

'I'd sat there maybe for an hour stupid an' unthinking, when suddintly the forest rounded with a deep roar, that started me afoot. I'd never heard a congo's howl before, but I'd no fear of that sound; the consciousness of being lost had come back on me. Straight on I crashed through the bush, torn, bruised, an' falling, through marsh, an' creek, an' bamboo thicket, until exhaustion pulled me down once more. You see, sir, I was very young in years, an' had never before seen a forest bigger than a corn-patch. I'd just sense enough to know that one must die in the bush, an' die an awful death, if left there; but how to find a way out, I had no more idee than any other boy city-born an' bred.

'From time to time I shouted as shrill as I could, but the deep hot alleys of the forest sucked in the sound; an' before sundown, I was too hoarse for calling. As night came on, I sank down stupid again, an' so lay, not asleep but senseless. If a puma had found me then, he'd have had his supper cheap, but, thank Heaven, I never met one of them sneaking devils. When morning broke, I was faint an' sick with hunger, but for hours I was afeard to take the few fruits that lay round. Towards mid-day, always wandering, I found a bunch of yellow pig-apples growing on a vine; * they

* The Americans call all lianas 'vines.' Many of those found in Nicaragua have valuable qualities not at present known in Europe. The subject is alluded to beyond.

looked so nice that, poison or no poison, I gathered them all, an' chewed them up. They're not bad eating, aren't pig apples, anywhere, but to a starving man they do seem right-down good, I tell you. But there wasn't more than six or seven, an' the biggest not the size of a pigeon's egg, so they were soon over; an' all that day I found no more. Somehow, I never thought of being tracked, but only of getting back, an' of finding more apples. Once or twice I heard the sound of American rifles at a long distance, an' it almost killed me, for I *couldn't* make the boys hear. Towards dusk, I found a bed of wild pines, an' pulling out their prickly leaves, I ate the pith. I can't say it were nice, but neither was I at that time.

'On the second day, I began to feel hunger right badly. At first, it was a gnawing, weakly sense, less hard to bear because one felt helpless an' tired; but after twenty-four hours, hot fever came on, an' I seemed so wild and strong to die. Of drink there was plenty of course, for the ground was all a swamp, an' besides, the water-vines was common enough. There's greater medicine, sir, in those water-vines than all the doctors can make for you. If a man, sick to death with some diseases, will but come with me into the forest, I'll send him out at the week's end better in health than if his dearest friend had just deceased. There's wonderful secrets in the woods, an' we have them pretty much to ourselves as yet, we who know them. Them seventeen days behind Castillo shook my health for five years after, but at least I left there all the sickness I took with me; so I can't say it was all bad-luck that time, seeing as I got out in the end.*

'The third day was dreadful bad for hunger. I had a tearing an' refing inside, my sight was flaming an' dim by turns, an' pains twisted up every joint. My head was curiously clear all the while, except that sometimes I saw things in the wood as never was there; but that was mostly after the fourth day, when the pains left me from time to time. I guess hunger takes men very different. Some I've known give in with forty-eight hours, an' lie down to die with no great suffering—ay, an' good-hearted ones too. But your doctors stamp down their little walk, all gravelled an' boxed in, for eternal nature to take exercise up or down, an' if ever she steps over their little hedge into her own wide fields, my! there's such a stampede among all the little professors. They told me in New York as no man could live ten days without food—there! An' we know a score of men as has done so, an' don't make much gas about it neither.

'It would take a week to go through all the fancies I had, an' the strange figures that came before me in the time I kept a sort of consciousness, for I was light-headed mostly. I seem to recollect meeting a big tiger, an' looking him straight between his flaming eyes, without a morsel of fear; but he slunk off like a starved cat, an' you may guess I was an elegant extract so to scare

a San Juan jaguar. The thundering howl of congos, morning an' evening, is the mem'ry I mind best of all that time: one day there was a little mottled squirrel came an' sat in a great fern overagainst me, an' looked down into my face with eyes that seemed full of pity. Eh! how I hated that little cretur, that looked so lovingly at me. I crept nearer an' nearer to catch him, but he sprang away like a bird, an' I was too weak even to curse. Sometimes I fancied all my mates were with me, but all lost an' dying; sometimes we were on the river; an' there's one dream I mind well, for it came over an' over agin—a game at poker, in which one player cheated, an' I shot him. It had happened so on the river; but I wasn't playing, and it wasn't I that shot. If it had been, if I'd had any man's blood on my mind at that time, I'd have given in the very first week of the horror. My dreams awake an' asleep were always full of murder an' death somehow. Now there's a cause for that, I take it, somewhere in one's inside, for there's folks who dream happy when they're starving.

'I suppose I gathered apples when they could be found, an' chewed pinuelas even when mad, for I kept on living. That I wandered about, never resting longer in one place than just to get strength for moving on again, I know, for it was one of the fancies that I must wander ever an' ever through the green dimness o' the bush, under the endless trees, until I died. Ah! it was an awful time. Sometimes it seemed as I had been lost for years; an' then my mem'ry was racked with old stories of men finding their way out of a wood by some clever craft or other, but the tales was all muddled up with murders, an' old times, an' ghosts. 'Twould have been easy enough for a good woodman to track out; an' maybe I might have done it myself, if I'd hidden my head at the first moment, an' thought it over quietly as you did to-day, sir; but I hadn't the experience—that's where it is! Experience is better than a compass, any day. The creeks at which I drank—most likely all of them—would have led me to the San Juan, where I'd have been saved; and in the days I had some strength an' reason, I might have followed them up an' down. *For all those seventeen days I never were three miles from Castillo*, an' they found me at last within two hundred yards o' the fort. That would seem a queer story to home-staying folk, wouldn't it? But a green hand might a'most starve to death in a patch of San Juan forest three hundred yards square.

Of the last ten days in the bush, I recollect nothing at all, an' I'm thankful for it. For the ants found out my helplessness, an' the beetles, an' the flies; only, thank God, the turkey-buzzards didn't come nigh me until the last minute. But when my body was found by the soldiers in going for grass, there was half-a-dozen of the horrid wretches, waddling round with their leathery heads aside, and hopping each moment closer. An' another queer sign they found, which had maybe scared the birds: all round my body were the tracks of pumas, as thick as if they'd been dancing a considerable sight of fandango among themselves. Why they hadn't eat me, I can't think; for he's a cowardly brute, yer lion, an' it's sweet cake to him to find a man asleep or dying.

'Wal! I don't want to make yer ill, so I won't

* The author is very well acquainted with the liana referred to, and regrets that his botany cannot confirm his woodcraft by identifying the species. It is a broad, thick-leaved parasite, soft in the stalk, which discharges full half a pint of water when cut through. There can be no reasonable doubt that it possesses remarkable qualities as medicine, though the author cannot attest his personal experience. The sap is drunk without any preparation, and natives and foreigners are alike enthusiastic about its strange virtues.

describe the state my poor body was in when they found it. I know I've always thought better of Greasers' pluck, since then soldiers ventured to carry my carcass to the fort. The Lord have mercy on all sick men in the jungle! You heard the ants had eaten my nose off! It weren't quite as bad as that; but in an hour or two more they'd a done it, if the turkey-buzzards had let them. My finger-ends was eaten by them, an' my ears; an' as to the flies, a man might shudder at that tale, I think, even though he were bred for a city lawyer, and had merried young. It's a ghastly thing to be eaten alive by insects, but never a man living was nearer to that end than I.'

'Ah!' said Frazer, 'the pumas'd a finished you off kerslash if you'd been fit to eat; an' its a wonder them sneaking vermain didn't track you out long since. I mind once, on the Sereb-piqui, being hunted by a puma for two days and nights. I knew he was trailing me, ready for a chance, but I couldn't get a sight of him all that time. But I squared it off in the end—I did so. How came the soldiers to find you, Vansten?'

'They were prospecting for sacate for the commandante's mule, and came across me in the swamp.—It's midnight past, boys, an' I'm right-down sleepy. Good-night!'

BENEFIT OF CLERGY.

'To be hanged without benefit of clergy!' The first three words of the sentence seem severe enough, but the last part of it conveys to many minds an idea that the intention of the legislature was to increase indefinitely the punishment of the culprit by sending him,

Cut off even in the blossom of his sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd,

to the other world, after breaking his neck with a halter in this one.

Such, however, was not the design of the framers of the sentence, nor did 'benefit of clergy' refer in any way to those spiritual ministrations which the coldest form of charity would not deny to the condemned. Benefit of clergy was a privilege founded upon the exemption which clerks in orders originally claimed from the jurisdiction of secular judges. Basing their claim upon the text, 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm,' and theoretically, perhaps, on the presumed impossibility of men whose calling it was 'to wait upon God continually' committing any serious crime, the clergy, in the days when justice was hampered by superstition, procured that, no matter how heinous the offence of which they had been accused, they were to be answerable to their own ordinary only, and not to the king's justices. A clerk arraigned or convicted before a secular judge, had but to declare who and what he was, his declaration being backed up, if necessary, by the demand of his bishop, and he was discharged into the custody of the ordinary, who was supposed to provide some sufficient punishment for him, or else to deliver him by 'purgation.' The latter process was most frequently adopted; it consisted in the accused taking oath before the ordinary that he was innocent, and a certain number of other people asserting, also upon oath, that they believed his statement.

In this way the clergy enjoyed an almost complete immunity from punishment for their crimes, and as these were neither few nor slight, their

privilege gave rise to much complaint by those who had to smart where the clergy were set free, and still more by those whom the clerical delinquents had outraged. The offensive assertion of the privilege in the case of the clergyman whom A' Becket refused to allow to be tried at common law, brought about the Constitution of Clarendon, and ultimately the death of the archbishop.

The Constitution of Clarendon, by which the clergy were admitted to be liable to process at common law, became in this respect a dead-letter, and the benefit of clergy survived and increased in the blood of 'St Thomas of Canterbury.' It was now extended to laymen who chose to claim it, and no further evidence of clerkship was necessary than that the claimant should be able to read or write. If he gave these proofs, he was given over to the ordinary, who put him to his purgation, or laid upon him some ecclesiastical penance, as in the case of real clerks. As this privilege was applicable in all cases of capital felony, and there was no limit to the number of times it might be enjoyed, the worst evil-doers in the country got off scot-free—at all events, they saved their necks—and the peace of the community was disturbed accordingly. The solemn farce of purgation became, in many cases, too ridiculous to be gone through, or else the ordinary would not give himself the trouble to witness it; and as the alternative punishment he was empowered to award was for the offences of actual clerks, it followed, as a matter of practice, that a lay-ruffian on receiving benefit of clergy was *ipso facto* discharged of his crime and its consequences.

This abuse of the privilege became so flagrant that a statute of Edward I., called the Statute of Westminster the First, provided that clerks convicted of felony, and delivered to the ordinary, were not to be allowed to go free without purgation, 'so that the king shall not need to provide any other remedy therein.' A statute in the 25 Edward III. recites the complaints of sundry prelates that the secular judges had actually hanged clerks, 'in prejudice of the franchises, and in depression of the jurisdiction of Holy Church;' and goes on to direct that 'all manner of clerks, convicted before the secular judges of treason or felony touching any other than the king, shall have the 'privilege of Holy Church,' and be given up to the ordinary. The Archbishop of Canterbury, however, promised at the same time safely to keep and duly to punish such clerks, 'so that no clerk shall take courage so to offend for default of correction;' a promise reiterated by another primate to Henry IV.

It may easily be imagined, however, that this promise was evaded. Not only did the ordinary *ex officio* incline to the merciful side, but he found it no light matter to receive, punish, maintain, and keep all the scoundrels that were 'admitted to clergy.' Favouritism had also free scope, and the worst criminals might be abroad with impunity, while offenders in smaller things were undergoing punishment. By 4 Henry VII. c. 13, it was ordered that clergy should be allowed but once to persons not in orders; and all who received the benefit were to be branded with a hot iron on the brawn of the thumb with the letter M if they were murderers, and T if they were felons of a less degree. This branding was to be done by the jailer in open court, before the convict was delivered to the ordinary. Eight years afterwards, when a master was murdered by his servant under

circumstances that excited much popular indignation, advantage was taken to pass an act to deprive all laymen who should thereafter murder their masters of the benefit of clergy.

Henry VIII. dealt the hardest blows that the institution received until quite modern times. A statute passed in the fourth year of his reign took away clergy from all murderers, and from certain felons, unless they were actual clerks. 'They bear them bold of their clergy, and live in manner without fear or dread,' is the excuse made in the preamble for interfering. The clergy sniffed the breeze that was ultimately to blow down many more of their privileges besides 'the privilege of Holy Church;' and they strenuously opposed the passing of this act, and fiercely denounced it when it actually was passed. The 23 Henry VIII. c. 1, recites the statute of Edward III., and the frequent promises, consistently broken, which the prelates had given, that persons admitted to clergy should not go free without purgation or some kind of punishment; and, observing that the existing state of things could not be tolerated, goes on to take away clergy in all kinds of *petit* treason, in murder, robbery from the person, and arson, unless the offenders be actual clerks of the rank of subdeacon and upwards. If they were clerks of these degrees, they were to be given to the ordinary; but instead of being admitted to purgation, they were to be imprisoned for life in the ordinary's prison. To help this statute, another was passed immediately afterwards, declaring it to be felony without benefit of clergy for any one to break out and escape from the prison. Power was also given to the ordinary, if he chose to exercise it, to degrade the criminal from his ecclesiastical rank, and to send him to the King's Bench, where he might be dealt with as one whom the church refused to shield, and be hanged accordingly.

By a series of statutes from Henry VIII. to George I., benefit of clergy was taken away from the more atrocious offenders, from horse-stealers, burglars, housebreakers by day, forcible abductors of women, 'from a certain kind of evil-disposed persons, commonly called Cut-purses or Pick-purses;' from men who stabbed others who were not prepared for defence; from bullies who made men drunk, quarrelled with them, and killed them for what they had about them; from such as steal cloth from the hosiers' drying-racks; and from such as steal his Majesty's ammunition-stores. One statute was passed in Charles II.'s time, expressly to take away benefit of clergy from 'notorious thieves in Northumberland and Cumberland,' men who were well known for spoilers, and apt to 'drive a prey,' but who could not be punished under the existing law. Elizabeth followed in her father's wake in clipping the wings of such birds of prey. Under her, it became law that when clergy was allowed to a man for an offence which was clergyable, it was not to free him from punishment for an unclergyable offence committed before, but not known at the time of his trial for the second. She also ordered that such persons as were admitted to the benefit should not be given over to the ordinary, nor go through the mockery of purgation, but she gave the magistrates power to imprison them for a year, the ancient ordinance of branding on the thumb not being revoked. Later statutes ordered the punishment of whipping and flogging as an alternative or addition to imprison-

ment; and for certain felonies, transportation. Philip and Mary took away clergy from accessories in murder, and several other crimes; so that, by the time the institution was near its end (*temp.* George IV.), the worst ruffians received no protection from it; and it exercised an influence rather beneficial than otherwise, by tempering the savage ferocity of the criminal law then in force, by which, according to Blackstone, no less than one hundred and sixty of the offences which might be committed in a day were punishable with death.

A statute of Edward VI., while taking away clergy from many offenders, clerical and lay, granted it as a right to a lord of parliament, for his first felony, though he could not read. He was also excused from the branding in the hand. Women appear not to have had the benefit of clergy until James I. gave it to them. The 21 Jac. I. c. 6, recites that, 'whereas by the laws of this realm, the benefit of clergy is not allowed to women convicted of felony, by reason whereof many women do suffer death for small causes;' and then goes on to give them the same privilege as men, subject to the like conditions as to branding, &c.

Benefit of clergy might be pleaded in bar of an indictment, but more frequently it was brought forward after trial, at least with persons who were not really clerks, in arrest of judgment. A clerk might, if he chose, waive his clergy, 'and note,' says Lord Coke, 'when he knew himself free and innocent, then hee would be tried by the common law; but when hee found himselfe fowle and guilty, then would hee shelter himselfe under the privilege of his clergy.'

Circumscribed within limits which rendered impossible the harm it once did, the privilege of Benefit of Clergy operated to mitigate the severity of the law which provided the punishment of death for so many offences, including thefts of articles exceeding twelvepence in value. But in 1827, it was deemed, along with the law which it tempered, too extravagant for a civilised people. In that year, benefit of clergy was utterly taken away and abolished, and the criminal law itself transformed into something less Draconic. By the 7 and 8 George IV. c. 28, transportation, imprisonment, and whipping are the punishments provided for offences hitherto clergyable; and 'the privilege of Holy Church' is now, equally with that of sanctuary, only known as a curious historical relic of barbarous times.

LORD ULSWATER.

CHAPTER XXXI.—THE ENVOY COMES BACK.

ONE by one, or family by family, the guests at St Pagans dropped off and went upon their way. The day following the picnic beheld the dispersal of the larger portion of the visitors who slept under the roof of the old abbey; and before twilight on the second day, the last lingerers had departed. The incident which had interrupted the harmony of the fête had left behind it a gloom and an awkwardness which all Lord Ulswater's tact, all Lady Harriet's stately condescension, backed by the cheery good-nature of Chirper and Macdirk, could not dispel.

'He behaved very badly. I have no patience with him,' one starched old squire had said to her glum daughters and her silent husband as the family

carriage rolled away along the down road: 'the county ought not to countenance such conduct.' And indeed there were very few voices uplifted in behalf of John and Flora. The ethics of the country are more severe than the laxer morality of London, and to win a *fiancé* from her troth was held as little less criminal than to tamper with the affections of another man's wife. Then, too, there were aggravating circumstances in the case. In the first place, Morgan was so rich that he seemed in some sort a British Institution, like the Funds or the Bank of England. People relished the mention of the mouth-filling sum-total of his enormous revenue, and gloated over the hypothesis of his being—Jews excepted—the richest commoner in the realm. Again, the unlucky scene had taken place at Lord Ulswater's own house, and there were plenty of people ready to say and swear that the picnic had been planned for this especial purpose. But the worst of the damnable features of the case, in the eyes of many who discussed it, was the fact that Miss Hastings was the daughter of the Right Honourable Robert Drummond Eliot Hastings, a member of the cabinet. This, to a majority of those who talked the matter over, made what had been done to appear almost as a kind of sacrilege. Viewed in the mildest manner, it was regarded as an affront to her Majesty's ministry in the person of one of its most respectable components. The old simple reverence for a lord has been decaying ever since George III. and the king's friends declared war against the great Whig houses, and though titles are greedily sought for still, official power bears the bell over hereditary rank without it. The sympathies of the loudest talkers went with the place-man, and Lord Ulswater was considered to have committed an offence which it behoved society to punish.

Chirper, Macdirk, Fitzgeorge, with Sir Harry and the rest of the dandies, were true to their salt, and backed their friend's cause manfully. It was an ugly scrape, they admitted, and yet they were confident that matters would come right in the end. They were willing to do anything in Carnac's cause, they declared, short of calling on the Right Honourable Robert to convert that politician to their way of regarding the affair. But if Ulswater cared to shoot or be shot by Morgan, supposing that young man's homicidal mood to last, they were willing to risk a year in Newgate and the loss of commissions, appointments, or deputy-lieutenancies, for the sake of sticking to their friend. Or if Lord Ulswater could persuade Miss Hastings to try a stolen marriage, Chirper was ready to hold the rope-ladder, and Lord Macdirk would not have refused, on a pinch, to drive the engine of the special train.

But the master of St Pagans was not sorry when his real friends left him with hearty handshakes and offers of help, and he was left alone. What could Gunnesley Fitzgeorge or Sir Harry do for him in such a strait as that in which he found himself? A single female ally was worth all the banded Eleusinians in this instance. Such an ally he had secured in Lady Harriet, his aunt. It was late in the afternoon of the second day following the picnic, and only two or three loitering guests yet remained, people too insignificant to render it necessary that the mistress of the abbey should postpone her mission to Shelton Manor in order to entertain them. That task Lord Ulswater had taken on himself; and it was with a sigh of relief that he placed the last family-party in one of the

St Pagans' carriages, and saw the little milk-white cloud of chalk-dust that the whirling wheels aroused lessen and vanish on the down road. He did not go in again, but strolled out to the lodge-gate, passed it, and went on with a sauntering step towards a swelling mound, from which a still wider prospect of the green table-land could be obtained, and from the top of which he could catch the first glimpse of Lady Harriet's returning equipage. He was eager, more eager than he cared to own even to himself, as to the return of his ambassadress and the probable result of her mission. She had set forth early, as soon after luncheon as the carriage could be ordered, and it was getting late. The red flush in the west, and the black and golden bars of cloud that spanned the crimson of the heavens, gave token of the coming of night. The moment after, he had gained the summit of the mound, and shading his eyes with his hand, was gazing down through the nearly level rays of the sinking sun, watchful for the expected carriage, a rustling of some boughs near him attracted his attention.

Bare and bleak as the hillock might seem, with its toothsome grass short-cropped by the active sheep of the down pastures, there was one tuft or clump of hazel-bushes that rose above the level of the crisp turf; from this clump the rustling proceeded. Instantly, Lord Ulswater's memory, tenacious of minute matters as of great ones, brought him back to the days of his boyhood. The mound, he knew, was called Monkshill—why or wherefore, the tongues that could have told had been hushed long ago; but by the broken stones that had been found in the hollow beneath, it was conjectured that a wayside chapel, or small shrine, had once stood upon the rising-ground. Be that as it might, the few bushes that grew in a cluster a little below the summit, on the side most remote from the abbey, were the only shelter existing for miles of smooth green-sward. There was a hole or depression in the chalk, too, in the centre of the hazels, and here Lord Ulswater, then a younger brother, with no idea of succeeding to the title and estates, had when a boy found a hare, a poor tired-out thing, with wet sides and reeking fur, that had crawled into the hole as a last attempt to escape the dreadful hounds, and so lay, panting and passive.

John Carnac, as a boy, had been of the same temper that belonged to him still. He was not scrupulous, but neither was he wantonly cruel. To the very last, he would step aside to avoid harming an insect, he who had in him the iron indifference to bloodshed that goes so far towards the composition of a conqueror. He had taken the hunted hare, dead-beat, and hardly able to look up at him, under his protection, just as some human suppliant may have been received under that of the stormy Demos of Athens, and the creature had lived and grown tame in the orchard of the home-farm, half-a-dozen years and more.

Now from among the bushes, cautiously parted by two strong hands, there protruded the bullet-head of Bendigo Bill. 'Hist! it's me, my Lord,' the garrotter said in a low voice that hardly rose above a whisper. 'I've been here these four hours, on the chance.'

Most certainly Lord Ulswater's meditations had been thousands of miles removed from Bendigo Bill and all connected with him. But he had those firm nerves without which a great man

finds it difficult to convince others that he is great. There were times when even his inner strength gave way, as a steel sword, Toledo trusty, bends to pressure. But, however, he turned smiling to face this thief, as if his daily practice had been to hold conversations with gentlemen whose lower limbs were ensconced in a shallow chalk-pit, and whose brawny shoulders, fustian-clad, and shock-heads, capped with brown cloth, edged, in spite of summer, with fur, rose up portentous among the clustering nut-boughs.

'Four hours,' said Lord Ulswater, 'make up a good deal of time. You are a patient fellow. Suppose I had not come here? It was, I assure you, by the merest chance that I did so.' There was this peculiarity about the master of St Pagans, that his manner of speaking to his social inferiors was quite his own; and it had the rarest of rare merits; it set at their ease those to whom he spoke. Few of us can say the same. There are few more painful spectacles than that of a member of the educated, well-to-do, kid-gloved class addressing an average specimen of the 'working-man.' For his very life, he cannot be natural. He is perhaps sincerely desirous to respect the feelings of his new acquaintance, and hence he leaves the old 'haw-haw' manner to sons of rich sugar-bakers and stock-jobbers. But he cannot speak simply. He may have learned wisdom from the lips of Kingsley, professor and preacher, and in this case he is likely to be honestly afraid of the artisan, as of one mightier, and wiser, and holier than he, and to shew it. Or, he may possibly be serious-minded, in which case he will address the working-man in words of one and two syllables, speaking very slowly and distinctly, as to a little child; but in hardly any instance will he be plain-spoken and easy of manner as Lord Ulswater was.

'If you hadn't come, my Lord, I know what I'd ha' done,' answered the man. 'I've found out which your window is, and I'd have chucked up gravel, and whistled. I must have got speech of you somehow.'

'Why?' asked the tall, strong, prosperous gentleman, looking smilingly into the face of this strange he-Dryad peeping out from among the hazels. In a picture-gallery where ancestral portraits, not of Wardour Street origin, abound, we may sometimes see the same face and form repeat itself along the shadowy line of many generations. Alberic, in plate-armour, with the Lancastrian scarf over his breast-plate, might be twin-brother to Sir Henry there, in the buff coat laced with silver, and the white-plumed helmet, just as when he rode to Worcester or Naseby for Charles I. And Philip, the Mohock of the early Georgian reigns, as they have painted him in velvet and gold-lace, with Mechlin cravat awry, and periwig disordered, sipping his chocolate, and practising a *coup* at piquet, while his gaudy parrot screams uncared for, and his jewelled sword lies on the violin by his side, how clearly does he reproduce the baron who conquered at Bosworth, and the baronet who died in the Gatehouse prison!

John, Lord Ulswater, was a handsome likeness of several of the better-looking of his race. There had been a young Carnac once who never lived to wear gold spurs, but was unhorsed and butchered in some obscure battle of the Regent Bedford's wars against the French. This lad's comely, smooth face, looking out from under the raised visor of his

steel basenet, was one of the ornaments of the collection of family pictures at St Pagans. It was singularly like that of John Carnac. The same oval shape of the face, the same bloom on the cheek, the same falcon-glance in the bold blue eyes, the same golden sheen upon the hair, an almost feminine beauty united with virile strength and decision of character. The original of the portrait—a poor daub, the work, it is likely, of some wandering Italian painter-friar—was not one of the celebrities of the house. It was not quite certain whether he was Rowland, third son, or another son, whose name had become obliterated, somehow, on the vellum of the pedigree, of the Sir John of the day, both of which younger scions of the House of Carnac were pithily recorded to have 'died in the wars. *Pro animis oramur!*' It might have been a curious speculation as to whether this poor cadet, who never lived to be knighted, or to marry, or to own an acre, was like the present lord in mind as well as in body, and whether it was an ambitious and a fiery soul like that of his ten-times-removed great-nephew that the French boor's knife let out when young Carnac, lying helpless on the ground, was murdered for the sake of his harness and horse-trappings.

At anyrate, as Lord Ulswater stood looking on the garrotter, the man's sluggish imagination dimly conceived what a soldier, prize-fighter, or trooper of the New South Wales police, his aristocratic patron would have made upon occasion, and he did homage to him, as some big brute of a fighting man-at-arms might have done to Richard the Lion-hearted. Bendigo Bill had a capacity for hero-worship that would have satisfied Mr Carlyle himself, but his liability to impressions of this kind was strictly limited. To have throttled an asthmatic laureate, or broken the bones of a feeble-bodied astronomer-royal, would have occasioned him no twinge of compunction. A man might be Senior Wrangler or Double First, and translate Tupper into Greek verse, and the *Odyssey* into English rhyme, and square the circle, and settle the longitude, and know all that Macaulay and Darwin and Arago and Brewster ever garnered into their store of facts, and yet be mere grist to the mill whereof Bendigo Bill was the miller.

But this wretch, to whom learning, and science, and literature were meaningless words, and who hardly knew that vice was vicious, or religion holy, could thoroughly appreciate physical advantages. Those which belonged in so eminent a degree to Lord Ulswater had exercised a singular fascination over his dull nature. So now, as he thrust his head so cautiously out of the leafy screen of the hazel-branches, he wriggled and ducked, and twisted himself to and fro, in a manner that presented a ludicrous resemblance to that of an ugly rough-coated dog fawning upon its master. The fancy suggested itself to Lord Ulswater, who smiled for the second time. 'What have you, then, to tell me, Mr Huller?' he said, and waited for the reply.

That reply, however, was slow in coming. Bendigo Bill hesitated, fidgeted in his place of concealment, and, taking off his fur-edged cap, passed his thick fingers through his bristly hair. When he did speak, it was with an earnestness that, as it were, compelled attention. 'Tell you what it is,' said the man, plucking away, as the words dropped slowly from his lips, little pinches of fur from the trimming of his cap, as if his

restless hands must be employed.—'I'll tell you as downright truth as ever come out in one of their adjective courts, down yonder. First place, your Lordship was pleased to say, that day in the lane, you'd took a sort of fancy to me. Well, I took a fancy into my own head, and that's this, that if you'd let me serve you, my Lord, I'd do it true, and stick to you like your dog might, and come and go as you bid me. There! I ain't given to patter much, but what I say I mean, and there ain't another living man I'd say it to, except you.'

Words would fail to do justice to the peculiarly painful, ungracious, and reluctant way in which this speech was delivered. It is sufficiently distressing to watch an ordinary, rate-paying, reputable Briton returning thanks for some health-drinking at a public dinner. But, compared with Bendigo Bill, aldermen are glib, and county members eloquent; and yet, the ruffian spoke from his heart, and Lord Ulswater knew that it was so.

'My poor fellow,' said the master of St Pagans, 'I thank you for your evident good-will. I am not so foolish as to turn my back on a friend, however oddly I may have picked him up. But what on earth has brought you here, my man, since I take it for granted you have come on business?'

Bendigo Bill went on plucking at the fur-cap. 'That's just it, my Lord. Business it is. There's them in Shelton wishes no good to you, in the first place.'

Lord Ulswater instantly thought of the Right Honourable Robert, at Shelton Manor, and William Morgan, Esq., M.P. for Oakshire, at the Regent Hotel, neither of whom had any particular reason to be fond of him, just then. But it was absurd to suppose that the garrotter's errand could relate to cabinet ministers and members of parliament.

'The tug of the thing, to me,' pursued Bendigo Bill, viciously maltreating the cap, 'was, that it did seem so infernal mean for a cove to go and split upon his own father. It ain't—went on the ex-convict, with the air of a moralist laying down just principles—'it ain't that my father comes to much in a general way, but a dad's a dad, and you can't pick and choose for yourself. Before I go any further, my Lord, will you be so good as promise not to hurt the old chap?'

'Am I to understand,' said Lord Ulswater, 'that your father lives in Shelton, and that, for some reason which I am not aware of, he has a dislike to me?'

Bendigo Bill's scarred and battered countenance was eloquent with perplexity, but he did not speak, and Lord Ulswater, after waiting a moment to give him time to answer the last remark, resumed the conversation. 'I gather from your looks, Mr William,' he said, in very much the tone he would have employed towards Chirper or some other intimate friend, 'that my guess is wide of the mark, and that I have not been so unfortunate as to make your parent into an enemy of mine. Still, your warning has a meaning, naturally. Is that crib—I believe I use the correct expression'—added Lord Ulswater, with a nod in the direction of the abbey, to indicate of what especial dwelling he spoke—'is that crib to be cracked? or am I to consider that my watch and purse, and not my plate-chest, are the objects of some one's designs?'

The garrotter surveyed Lord Ulswater with much the same sort of stare as that with which a bull, separated from the drove, and uncertain of his way,

frequently regards a man. He could just make out that his noble patron was laughing at him, and this was of itself enough to rouse the anger which all dull folks, good or bad, feel when they are treated with levity. But the instinct of sullenness was subdued in him by the instinct of loyalty to the man who had conquered him, and spared him, and tamed him, and after a short pause he spoke again, with his eyes on the ground.

'There's deeper games than that, my Lord,' said Bendigo Bill; 'and I do ask you to believe me when I say the truth. Nobody wants to make white soup of the spoons at St Pagans, and it isn't an old cripple like my dad that's going to put the lug upon your Lordship; besides, I'd have cut such a job as that uncommon short. But if you don't have a care, my Lord, you'll be in Queer Street very soon, and that's all about it.' At this moment Lord Ulswater's quick eye discovered the carriage, very far off on the down road, a mere dark speck in the distance. It was coming on at a brisk pace. The dark speck grew larger and larger.

'What do you mean?' asked the owner of St Pagans; and this time there was some sternness in his voice.

Bendigo Bill hesitated to speak.

'You will oblige me by an answer!' said Lord Ulswater, in the tone of one who would permit of no trifling with his wishes. Nearer and nearer the carriage came; the distant sound of wheels and horses' feet came faintly to the ear.

'There's a chap in Shelton,' the ex-convict began, with evident reluctance to tell his tale in this fashion, 'that has had dealings with your Lordship. He boasts he'll very soon have you under his thumb.'

'Who is he?' asked Lord Ulswater, with no apparent astonishment, his eye always fixed on the approaching equipage.

Bendigo Bill looked up. 'Will you promise, come what will, to do the old man no hurt?'

'Meaning your respectable papa?' rejoined Lord Ulswater, in the old careless tone of good-humoured indifference: 'make yourself easy on that score, my friend. Your filial feelings do you very great credit. I shall do nothing to the old gentleman's detriment. Whose thumb is it beneath which I am to find myself, if you will do me the favour to tell me?'

'Dr Marsh is his name,' growled the ruffian, whom the sound of the approaching wheels rendered very uneasy; 'but it's a long story. I ought not to be seen here, talking to you, my Lord.'

This was undeniably true. The St Pagans carriage was drawing nearer every moment, and no doubt the servants must already have caught sight of Lord Ulswater's tall form standing conspicuously on the western side of the mound, although Bendigo Bill was yet concealed by his green tent of boughs.

'Among the ruins! as soon as it is quite dark. You know the ruins well, I suppose, as a Shelton man born? Well, then, be at the door of the guest-house in two hours' time. Do not fail me!' said Lord Ulswater hurriedly, and he turned away and descended the hill with a quick step, reaching the house in time to receive Lady Harriet as she alighted, pale and weary, from the carriage. 'Good news, dear aunt?' he said inquiringly, and with an eagerness that he did not care to hide. Lady Harriet looked harassed and worn, and years older

than when she had started that day for the manor. 'I have done for you, nephew, what I never thought to do, and borne for your sake what I never thought to endure; but you are my sister's son, dear, and I do not grudge it. Let me sit down here, in the Tapestry Room, where poor Reginald died, and I will tell you all.'

CHAPTER XXXII.—MAKING THE BEST OF IT.

'You are to see her to-morrow, my dear—to see her to-morrow! I am so glad, for your sake!' It was thus, with many tears, that kind old Lady Harriet had spoken, crying on her nephew's shoulder, and with all the ice of her stately coldness thawed for the time being. Good creatures of Lady Harriet's temperament always become actually grateful to those whom they have served, especially if their kind offices have cost them pain, and toil, and self-sacrifice. It was for this reason that the late lord had been so dear to the aged relative who had watched over his sickly infancy and melancholy manhood, and who had lived to close his eyes when he sank to sleep like a tired child.

It is certain that in those early days, when the brothers were boys together, Lady Harriet had been almost jealous of John's superiority to the feeble heir of the House of Ulswater. She was nettled by hearing his praises sounded by young and old, and provoked by the comparisons that were too often drawn between the brilliant cadet, king of all hearts, and the weakly, morbidly sensitive elder brother, to whom the law of primogeniture gave the wealth and honours of the family. John, too, poor as he was in fortune, was rich in high health and spirits; one of those strong, buoyant souls that seem to soar above our pity, and which it is scarcely possible to imagine otherwise than self-reliant and prosperous. But now Reginald was dead, and the sole surviving nephew was in trouble, and under a cloud of anxiety and doubt, and the old aunt's heart warmed towards him, as it was in her nature. For his sake she had made a great holocaust of her pet foible, pride, and had swallowed the bitter pill of enduring contumely without resenting it. She had to give an account of her mission; but before she had got beyond the barest and most formal exordium, the sight of her nephew's anxious face overthrew her resolve, and she hastened, like a true woman, to reveal the climax of her story before the tale was told.

It appeared that Lady Harriet Ashe, on arriving at Shelton Manor, was very ill received. Mrs Hastings could hardly, under any provocation, have been otherwise than polite; but the politeness of a Belgravian matron is quite consistent with the most freezing coldness or the most malignant hostility. To watch two well-bred women of the world at conversational sword-and-dagger play, dealing each other a succession of spiteful little stabs with smiling composure, and delighting in the wounds that they inflict, is an edifying spectacle, much more so than to see Mrs Rourke, in vulgar rage, tear off Mrs O'Leary's cap, or tie up a stone in a stocking to do battle with Mrs Flanagan.

But poor Lady Harriet's errand was not a fighting one: she had come to sound a parley and display the white flag, and conclude the best terms obtainable, and her former friend was as furious as a hurt tigress. Indeed, it must be confessed that Mrs Hastings had much to vex her. No one likes to have a project destroyed; no one is easily

consoled for the overthrow of what it has cost labour and thought to construct. A child is no better pleased when some facetious grown-up friend blows down his many-storied house of cards, just as the roof is on, than is a spider whose fly-ensnaring net is demolished by the housemaid's broom.

Was it reasonable to expect anything but malice and hatred from that Mayfair Arachne, wife of the Right Honourable Robert, whose neat web had been broken just when the biggest of big flies, with double gilt wings and damasked armour, had been so satisfactorily secured between the glutinous meshes! No temper—not Griselda's, for she had no daughters to marry to rich men—could be expected to endure such a trial without turning acid. Mrs Hastings was in her tarest mood.

There were so many items in the account of this poor lady's vexations, the guests had very wisely taken themselves off, foreseeing storms and shadow where bright social sunshine had prevailed. It was quite a curious coincidence, the need for Crashaw of the Blues to rejoin what he called his 'wegiment,' albeit the rogue knew that he had two months' leave unexpended, on the very same day that dear Dora Warburton was compelled to start for the shores of the Bristol Channel, there to nurse her adored grandpapa through his rheumatic attack. Young Warburton, a moral padlock on his lips, had gone off as escort to his sister; and the other visitors had also adjourned to their regiments and their grandfathers, in various shapes, from an imperative lawyer, who would see young Graceless at his office, willy-nilly, before eminent counsel should leave town for the Alpine Glaciers, down to the arrival at far-off homes of married sisters long in India, and whom it was incumbent to greet as early as steam-power could render the meeting practicable.

Rats run from a falling house. Mrs Hastings knew that as well as she knew that two and two make four. They fled from Shelton Manor as from St Pagans; but being rats of good-breeding, they bade farewell in the politest manner, and affected to be utterly unaware that the roof-tree was rotten or the walls tottering. And in the case of the Right Honourable Robert's Elizabethan abode, there really was no reason to apprehend disaster. But family jars are not pleasant ceremonies whereat, as the French style it, to assist. Scoldings sometimes fall upon innocent ears, and the stranger may share in the bickering of the now discordant domestic circle.

Then the Right Honourable Robert, when things did not go smoothly, was a trying husband to live with. His gout, his impatience of opposition, his strong sense of his own dignity, combined to goad him into a sort of chronic rage that lasted a long time. And there was the great disappointment itself, and the handle given for ill-natured gossip, and the unendurable derision, and mockery, and genuine exultation, of rival matrons, distanced in the race for the great Morgan Stakes on the course matrimonial. Flora had won those stakes so well, without any undue jockeying of beaten competitors, without a suspicion of trickery, and had done infinite credit to her trainer and proprietrix. And now, was it not heartbreaking to see the whole victory spoiled by this wretched break-down at the finish!

There was Flora on her hands, tearful, sorry to offend, but not penitent; firing up, on the contrary, in defence of her lover, of that treble odious Ulswater, whom Mrs Hastings could have strangled

with pleasure. There was William Morgan, desperate, savage, miserable to the limits, almost, of misery, reproaching her for not keeping better watch over his future wife. There was Ruth, piteous and sorrow-stricken, faithfully labouring to console her brother, who cared so little for her. There were the servants, the neighbours, the people who knew very well what was amiss, but before whom it was necessary to keep up a show of calm indifference. All this was hard to bear.

Then, when things are at their worst, arrives good Lady Harriet, intruding herself into the lions' den, and only too conscious how the white fangs gnashed, and the sharp talons were unsheathed, and the hollow roar of menace resounded within. It was a terrible visit. Women have the dubious advantage over men that they can talk and talk, and add the curse of Kehama to the curse of Ernulphus, and say shocking things to another (in elegant periphrasis, of course), without stirring from the sofa on which they sit. Two men, no matter what their rank—cardinals, princes, shoe-blacks—would fly at each other's throats before half the altercation could be got through that a brace of disputants of the gentler sex can wage to the bitter end, masks on to the last, and social varnish unbroken.

But Lady Harriet did not fight. 'Strike, but hear,' was the pith of what she had to say. She dropped her weapons at the other Amazon's feet, so to speak, and bared her bosom to the sword-point, and let the gridding steel have its will of her defenceless flesh. She did not irritate Mrs Hastings by any ill-judged defence of her nephew. The criminal, metaphorically, came in a white shirt, with bare feet and dangling halter, to crave mercy.

This almost unprecedented meekness did not go without its reward. After a protracted interview, intersected by short absences, during which Mrs Hastings went to consult with her husband, or to speak to Flora, now relegated to solitary confinement in her own rooms, a sort of capitulation was agreed to. The high-contracting parties to this treaty looked at the case from widely different points of view, but the conclusion to which they came was not unreasonable in itself. Mr Morgan, as Flora's mother said, was willing, still, to keep his word. He would overlook what had occurred, and would marry Miss Hastings, though in that latter case his previous plans must be greatly modified. If Flora would agree, he would marry her, give up his new-fledged M.P.-ship for Oakshire, and go abroad for some years. A greater proof of being sincerely in earnest as to his love for the girl he hoped to make his wife could hardly be given.

But, as Mrs Hastings said, sighing, Flora was obstinate. She held out against browbeating and advice. Nothing could move her. Very sorry she professed herself for the heart-wound to William Morgan, and for the fickleness of her conduct, to all appearance. 'But you know, mamma, I never loved him,' she said. That position was inextinguishable. Much good talk, many tears, and the Right Honourable Robert's influence, had been found inadequate to the task of converting this little heretic. It had not been found very easy to induce her to grant the discarded suitor a personal interview. 'Why should I see him, poor fellow? we are both of us wretched enough as it is,' the girl had replied to her mother's entreaties; but she had yielded at last, and on this final meeting everything hinged.

Mrs Hastings had a considerable faith in the malleability of her own sex, for good or for evil, when, as the old song says, 'the tear is in the eye.' But if the worst should come to the worst, it would be silly to throw the helve after the hatchet. William Morgan was to speak with Miss Hastings on the following morning. If that interview should end in a reintegration of love, or, more correctly, of that sober-coloured variety of affection which some consider suitable for domestic wear and tear, all would be well, and Arachne would darn her web and keep her fly, gold-winged, lustrous.

But if, as seemed only too probable, the wilful damsel should let the great prize go, why, then, if Lord Ulswater chose to be properly contrite and humble, he might call, and be permitted to make his proposals in form, with every prospect of becoming son-in-law to the Right Honourable Robert. It was a *pis aller*, because Morgan was so rich. But it was wiser than allowing Miss Hastings to wear the willow during another year or so of blighted hopes and public commiseration.

'In short, Lady Harriet, we must do as others have done: we must make the best of a bad business,' Mrs Hastings had said, towards the close of the negotiations. Poor grim Lady Harriet had winced as she assented to this. We none of us like to have what old ladies call our belongings vilified or lightly held. And the besetting sin of Lord Ulswater's ambassador was pride. She was very proud—proud of her own race—proud of that to which her sister had allied herself by marriage—proud, too, of the precedence and privilege of the titled class to which she appertained. She had all the old ideas about the suddenly enriched, auriferous mushrooms whose elevation jarred with her antique theories of the fitness of things. Never had she been one of those who bowed the knee to the Golden Calf, incarnate in the person of the young Cressus of Cramingham. But now she was obliged to bend her head, and swallow her indignation as best she might, while she heard her hostess deplore the cruel fate that would make Flora a poor peeress instead of the bride of Fortunatus Morgan.

The former friends parted with a cold kiss, and some semblance of their old friendship, which had been severely cracked, if not shattered by late events. Probably they could never be quite on the same terms as before. Lady Harriet's ears were tingling still with some of the speeches that she had been forced to hear, and there were venomous darts in her old breast that rankled yet, and would rankle till Time should cure the smart. Mrs Hastings was politic, but not cordial in her share of the reconciliation that had been patched up between the two families. No angler, after hooking a noble silvery salmon of weight unprecedented, after struggling and giving line, and being dragged over sharp rocks and through pools, finds it easy to accept the excuses of the clumsy gillie who fails in gaffing the fish, but breaks the line instead, and sets the plunging prisoner free.

But an arrangement was entered into. A message, it had been settled, was to be sent to St Pagans in case no reconciliation should ensue between those whose betrothal had been thus violently brought to an end. And if so, Lord Ulswater would be welcome! Well might the kind old aunt say, as she sank, weary and trembling, upon a seat in the Tapestry Room, that she had done

much for her nephew. So she had. She had made the sacrifice of her own pride, at the cost of a wrench to her heart-strings. John, Baron Ulswater, heard her story with great satisfaction, thanked her in appropriate language, and was pleased and grateful.

Some two hours afterwards, when Lady Harriet, exhausted with the day's toil, had bidden her nephew a good-night, Lord Ulswater glanced up at the darkling sky. 'I must see my bandog. The human brute is waiting for me!' he said, and left the room.

ROADS AND ROAD-MAKERS.

RIDING into London almost every day by one of our main suburban thoroughfares, I have been in the habit of noting from month to month the process of what that intelligent body, a Local Board, calls road-mending. How differently they do these things in Paris, I will state presently; but first let us see what are the principles which our best engineers have laid down, and how they are carried out by the metropolitan authorities. If the science were in its infancy, these gentlemen might be forgiven for limiting their part of the work to merely supplying the raw material, and leaving it to carriages, cabs, and omnibuses to grind it down into a finished roadway. But though our neighbours may have far outstripped us in the race, the art of road-making, in point of years at least, is by no means in its infancy in England. In the *Transactions of the Royal Society in 1736*, is a 'Dissertation concerning the Present State of the High Roads of England,' &c. by Robert Phillips, who remonstrates against the very practice of which we have still to complain—that of laying down large heaps of unprepared gravel, to be gradually consolidated by the labour of traffic. This was six-and-thirty years after the management of our main roads had been taken out of the hands of the parishes, to become a profitable commercial undertaking; and we trust, now that the element of direct profit has again ceased to operate, common-sense may yet prevent our road-managers from relapsing into the old 'penny-wise-pound-foolish' plan.

The great principle enunciated by Phillips was that of securing the largest amount of elasticity in a roadway; Macadam in 1819, and Telford did no more than perfect the means of attaining this end. The systems of these great engineers, though differing in important particulars, agree in this—that the upper coating of the road should be of one material, the stones of uniform size, and not exceeding six ounces in weight. This coating was to be laid down in layers of not more than three inches deep at a time. They objected to the use of any finer material to bind together the larger stones, on the ground of the moisture which it would absorb rendering the road liable to be broken up after a frost. In this respect, modern experience has corrected their views; indeed, it seems hardly possible to admit their reasoning, for the fine material must come at last from the crushing of the larger stones, and it is found that by using it at first, the road may be put into a perfectly smooth state in a very short time. In Paris, this is done by steam-rollers of about twenty-seven tons' weight; fine sifted gravel is plentifully scattered over the surface of the road-metal, and this is broken to about half the size of that

which we see about London. The road-mending is generally carried on at night; and you may often find in the morning some two-hundred-and-fifty or three hundred yards of fresh roadway, as smooth and fit for traffic as could be made in a month's wear in London. About London, the process is exceedingly tedious—first, the old roadway is picked up, and the granite metal liberally laid on, six inches at least in depth, and in blocks from the size of half a brick-bat downwards. In about a fortnight's time, the traffic has worn a fair road on either side of the way, leaving the middle untouched, except where some wretched vehicle has been obliged to cross over from one side to the other of the undigested mass, leaving two deep tracks to receive the standing water, and assist in the future destruction of the road. At the end of this time, the practicable part of the road will be blocked up with trestles, and the grinding and rolling process of the centre will be left to be done by the passing traffic for another fortnight. Thus, for a month we shall have had only half the road for use, at the end of which time it may remain in a pretty good state for another month or two, with occasional patchings of fresh metal; then the whole process will begin again. But even this result is not attained without constant supervision and labour. Hardly a day passes but we meet gangs of poor broken-down fellows sweeping the mud towards the centre of the road; or in fine weather, and before the water-cart has gone by, filling the air with clouds of dust. They always prefer a windy day for the dry process, probably because it gives the dust-carts less trouble to collect what remains. They are also much in the habit of picking up by hand the larger lumps of granite, or of collecting three or four of them in a broken shovel, to be again thrown upon the central chaos. By the French system, all this is unnecessary; the stones once rolled down are rarely disturbed, and from the smoothness of the surface, the actual wear is very much lessened. No one will hesitate as to which plan is the more convenient; but if we find that our own is the more expensive, any one who understands the English character will at once see why we are slow to change it. The fact is, that the cost of the one system can be shewn in a few minutes, and comes to so many pounds, shillings, and pence; in the other case, it is reckoned by broken-down horses, worn-out carriages, and general waste of time and labour—items which cannot very well be put down at a round sum in a balance-sheet, but which have a real value after all. For instance, a Hansom cab weighs about eight hundredweight, and can be moved along a good level road by a force equal to twenty-four pounds, or, according to the average strength of a man, by half a tailor; on a bad road, it would take at least a tailor and a quarter to do the same work; and on a new-metalled suburban road, I have seen a whole man hardly equal to the exertion. Not long ago, the municipal authorities at Paris made a contract for the use of seven of the steam-rollers, the contractor undertaking to supply and work them for six years at a minimum price of four thousand pounds a year; or reckoning, according to work done for every ton-weight of the roller, at about fourpence-halfpenny for every two acres and a half of rolling. We know that coal is less than half the price in London which it is in Paris, so that we might allow a maximum of six

hundred pounds a year for a steam-roller on each of the principal thoroughfares within the metropolitan district—a sum which, I believe, would be willingly subscribed by those who use these roads, if the benefit to be obtained were proved to them.

There is a very good reason why our country-road makers should decline to adopt any such system: the traffic on them is hardly sufficient to make it worth its cost, and the materials of which they are generally made are so much softer, that they soon grind down into a good and lasting roadway; but even now, heavy horse-rollers might be found of practical service; and from personal experience, I can speak to the advantage of filling in the ordinary road-metal with firmer binding-material.

This year, many of us will have the opportunity of seeing how the plan answers in Paris; and perhaps it is not too much to hope that, in the course of this century, experience may bear its fruit, to the great relief (among others) of that much-suffering animal, the London cab-horse.

PER MARE, PER TERRAM.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.—THE BLUE-PETER.

THE next drawing-lesson was looked forward to not without trepidation, by both Maud and Mr Darcy. The latter felt, naturally enough, guilty about the picnic, and doubtful of his reception; while Maud was half angry, half anxious that he should not have really grown tired of them, and given them up. But his appearance put an end at once to all doubts on this last point. He was a little embarrassed, but evidently repentant, and anxious to be taken back into the good graces of Fern Villa; and though his first reception was somewhat colder than usual, he bore the chill so patiently, and was so gentle and engaging, that he was soon as high in favour as ever. Not a word was said on either side about his unaccountable absence from Rilbruff, and when the first constraint had worn off, they were as pleasant as possible together. Just before he left, Mr Darcy was talking about some piece of ship-news, in which Clara and Maud were always sure to be interested, and he asked: 'Did Mainwaring tell you?'

'No,' said Maud; 'though he was here yesterday when Mr Harris'—

'Mr Harris!' interrupted Mr Darcy in a tone of astonishment, and almost of consternation.

Maud looked at him, and saw that there was a singular look of trouble on his face. Clara saw it too.

'Yes, Mr Harris, of your ship,' Maud explained.

'Oh, of course,' he said slowly; and the subject dropped.

When he was gone, Clara said, looking after him as he passed down the avenue: 'Mr Darcy does not seem greatly delighted at our knowing Mr Harris, but that's the very reason why we'll see as much of him as ever we can.'

'Why didn't he come to the picnic himself, and then we never should have known Mr Harris?' said Maud a little pettishly.

'But I am very glad now he didn't!' exclaimed Clara, 'for we shall have a charming game of *Box and Cox* with the two buckets in a well—Mr Darcy with his drawing-lesson one day; Mr Harris picking ferns the next; and neither shall imagine

that we ever catch a glimpse of the other. Won't it be fun!'

Maud was delighted, but an objection suddenly occurred to her. 'Arthur will tell,' she said, growing serious.

'Arthur shan't tell,' replied Clara decisively: 'he must promise me to keep it a state secret.'

But Mr Mainwaring did not enter into the joke with so much gusto as the girls could have wished. He put on a grave face when he was told about it, and required a great deal of threatening and coaxing before he would promise to tell no tales; however, he did promise at last, and they were so far satisfied with him.

Mr Harris proved a most apt pupil, and after a few walks with the Misses Fitzwilliam, was already a finished fern-fancier. He set about making a collection of Brighthaven ferns, and bought a book, which he studied assiduously during his days in the ship, so that the strictest professor of botany would soon have found it difficult to puzzle him in the subject. All this time, Mr Mainwaring kept his promise faithfully, though reluctantly; but Clara and Maud observed with great amusement that he was always more or less out of humour when Mr Harris was with them, and that he always seized every opportunity of cutting short his stay, as he had done on his first visit. Sometimes he carried him off to make a call in the neighbourhood; sometimes he delivered a message from somebody who wanted him on particular business (which, however, could have well afforded to wait); but Mr Harris soon became very skilful in baffling his designs, and was not again to be so easily disposed of as he had been the first time.

Poor Mr Darcy little knew, or even suspected, what went on on his duty-days, otherwise he would hardly have come so smilingly to Fern Villa day after day. It happened once that he and Maud sat and sketched on the very spot where Marine No. 2 had been gathering ferns the day before, and no familiar spirit, no magnetic influence, warned him that the spot had been desecrated by the presence of a rival escort. Clara, however, did not forget it, for a half-smile stole over her face, and she cast a roguish glance at Maud, as much as to say: 'Don't you remember?'

Maud coloured, and bent her head over her drawing.

Another day, as they were preparing to go out, Clara asked him to bring *Sultan*, the Newfoundland, with him the next time, and he said: 'Oh, to be sure. Have you never seen him?'

'Except in your sketch,' put in Maud.

But little Carry Brent lisped out: 'Oh, Aunt Maud! I saw a big dog with a man on the road yesterday, while you were picking ferns with'—

Maud drew the child quickly towards her, laid her finger surreptitiously on her rosy lips, and said: 'Where is your doll, Carry dear?'

The puzzled child opened her eyes wide; she knew quite well that she had made a blunder, but could not divine what it was.

'Up-stairs, in her house,' she replied, pouting and flushing a little.

But the hint had not been lost upon Mr Darcy.

'I did not know you collected ferns,' he said. 'May I see your specimens?'

Maud rose reluctantly, and produced the book. Mr Darcy himself, in her place, would have had coolness and skill to avoid shewing it; but she got confused, and lost her presence of mind. She

well remembered a certain little plant of argentine which was fastened into one of its pages, with the inscription underneath: 'Mr H. H.'s first Fern,' and thought to herself, with a sort of amused dismay, that now the murder must out. However, she resolutely held the book in her own hands, and when she came to the dangerous place, managed dexterously to turn two pages together, and so avoid a discovery. Whether the manoeuvre altogether escaped Mr Darcy's remarkably quick eyes, may be doubtful; but, at all events, he let it pass, and said nothing.

But this sort of thing, pleasant as it was, could not go on for ever, and the end came in this way.

It was a beautiful day in July that Clara and Mr Mainwaring, Maud and Mr Harris, set out on one of their usual fern-hunting excursions. Both the gentlemen were rather silent and pre-occupied, but the weather was so charming, and the country they passed through so pretty, that brilliant conversation was not required, and their deficiencies were hardly noticeable. At last they came to a shady lane, where ferns grew in thick and graceful profusion by the edge of a little brook. They set to work to look for some of the rarer specimens, for their collections, and then, when the scientific part of their task was concluded, Maud said she would make herself a little bouquet, and sat down on the bank to put it together, the others promising to find her the materials for it. Just then, a naval uniform appeared in sight coming down the lane, and the pretty little scene which met the eye of the wearer was evidently not thrown away upon him. It was quite a picture. Maud, with downcast eyes, and an intent look on her pretty round face, such as you seldom see except in children, was busily arranging her bouquet, while her hat, with its blue ribbons, was thrown carelessly on the green bank beside her, and a ray of sunshine stealing through the trees lit up her coronet of golden hair. Mr Harris was standing near, supplying her with ferns as she wanted them—silent, but with an air of devotion which those who knew him best had seldom seen him wear. On the other side of the lane, Clara, with bright colour and sparkling eyes, was pointing out with her parasol each fern that Arthur was to gather, and uttering little exclamations, half petulant, half playful, at his unskilful efforts to obey her behests. Poor Arthur was soiling his shining boots with plunging on stepping-stones into the muddy stream; his hat had been knocked off by the branch of a tree; his honest face was flushed with exertion, and after all, he generally emerged from the brook-side with a ragged, worm-eaten frond, instead of the green little beauty he had been ordered to procure. The owner of the naval uniform chuckled with amusement as he took in all the details of this little picture, then nodded to the officers, and passed on. It was no other than 'Old Dunderhead.'

As they were walking home, Mr Mainwaring began after some minutes' silence, 'Clara!'

'Well?' she said interrogatively, with one of her pretty, surprised looks up at him.

'I don't think,' he went on, plunging with an effort into his subject—'I don't think all this is quite fair to poor Darcy.'

'Arthur,' she replied, 'don't be disagreeable.'

'I am not going to be disagreeable,' he said with decision; 'but I do not think it fair. You see as well as I do how devoted he is to Maud, and I must say it's more than she deserves if she goes on encouraging Harris in this way. Can't she take her

choice fairly between the two, and have done with all this nonsense?'

'Oh, what a lovely lecture!' exclaimed the incorrigible Clara. 'But, Arthur,' she continued, 'that's the joke. Don't you know we're playing *Box and Cox*?'

An angry flush rose in his face, and he said hastily: 'I don't like it, Clara, and I won't have it.'

'Mr Mainwaring!' she exclaimed, colouring and drawing back with genuine astonishment and indignation.

'I don't like it, and I won't have it,' he repeated sternly.

Clara walked away from him to the other side of the road, and was silent for some time, keeping her head down, and poking at the ground with the tip of her parasol as she went along. At last she said slowly, without lifting her eyes: 'Then I don't like you, and I won't have you.'

'My dear Clara!' exclaimed poor Arthur, quite taken aback by this announcement.

'No,' she went on, still never looking at him, 'there's an end of it now. I'll send you back your letters when I get home.'

A sudden flash of indignation lit up Mr Mainwaring's face, and a reddish glow came into his hazel eyes. 'Very good,' he said, shortly and sternly; and then they walked towards home, sulking and silent, with anger in their hearts.

Their gestures, and the very expression of their shoulders, would have made the quarrel legible enough to the couple who came a little way behind, but that they were too much absorbed in their own conversation to take note of anything besides. Mr Harris had begun to speak with an earnestness very different from his usual gay manner, and before Maud knew or imagined what was coming, he had made her a most serious, almost a passionate proposal.

'O Mr Harris!' she exclaimed, in a sort of consternation, 'I never thought of this!'

His face fell, and he said in a low voice: 'Can you then say nothing pleasant to me?'

'I am afraid not,' she answered, almost in a whisper.

'At least you may tell me,' he went on with a sparkle that was almost fierce in his blue eyes—'at least you may tell me if I have been forestalled.'

He paused, but Maud was silent, and her eyes were on the ground.

Her silence stung him, and his brow darkened, and his voice took an angry tone as he continued: 'Because, if it's Darcy,' he said, 'he has no right on earth'—He stopped in embarrassment, and flushed to the roots of his hair; even his eyes were so full of confusion that for some minutes he could not venture to look up.

But Maud now lifted her head, and spoke with firmness. 'You have not been forestalled, Mr Harris,' she said, 'and I do not see why Mr Darcy's name should be mentioned at all in the matter.—But we shall be as good friends as ever,' she added in a softer voice—'shan't we?'

'Thank you,' murmured Mr Harris, feeling more miserable than he had ever been before in his life.

By a sort of tacit agreement, they quickened their pace so as to overtake the couple in front, who were also not ill-pleased to have their uncomfortable *tête-à-tête* interrupted. But to all four it seemed as if Fern Villa had been removed to an indefinite distance, and as if their walk, which had

begun so pleasantly, would never come to an end. All things do, however, sooner or later; so at last the gentlemen had made their constrained adieus, and the ladies were at liberty to reflect upon what had occurred. Maud ran up to her room, and closed the door; then throwing her hat from her on the bed, she began walking up and down with hands clasped together. What a thoughtless, vain, miserable little flirt she must have been, she thought, in her self-reproach, when it had come to this! Was this the end of all their amusement, to have given so much pain? for Mr Harris's evident distress had really touched her deeply. If, indeed, it had been the other, perhaps her answer might have been different; but this idea, though probably latent in her mind, was not acknowledged, far less expressed even to herself.

Clara, too, light-hearted as she was, did not escape some shade of remorse for her treatment of Arthur. But, after all, was it not his own fault? Had he not begun by being prosy and stupid, and ended by being cross and disagreeable? And if he made himself unpleasant now, what would he be afterwards? So she managed with tolerable calmness to make his letters and little presents into a parcel, to be sent to him on the first opportunity, and flattered herself, in the midst of her pique and pride, that she was acting most discreetly, and with a wise regard to her future happiness.

It would be hard to meet in the course of a long summer day two more moody and dissatisfied-looking men than the two officers as they made their way to Brighthaven pier—Mr Harris swinging his cane with an uncompromising air, half sullen, half defiant—Mr Mainwaring striding along with his hands in his pockets, and without even the consolation of his accustomed cigar. Poor Arthur! he was indeed deeply wounded, and his bright ideal of female perfection was dashed suddenly to the ground. He had dreamed that women were angels, he waked to find them capricious flesh and blood, and the discovery just took the rose-tint off the clouds, and made things look a little bleak.

If Mr Dunder had been anybody else than 'Old Dunderhead,' he would have seen that day at mess that any future time would be more appropriate for his little joke than the present; but being who he was, he began with considerable glee: 'I say, Harris, I didn't know you were such a hand with the ladies,' he said in a jovial voice, that was half strangled by his necktie, but made a shift to half choke the proprietor instead, as it came out. 'That was a pretty sight I stumbled upon to-day. "Belay that, my boy!" said I to myself coming down the road.' Here he chuckled and coughed with no small amount of self-satisfaction. 'Ah, you're a knowing one!' he went on, when he had cleared his throat again; 'you managed to give Mainwaring the worst of it, leaving him to dredge for weeds in a muddy tide-way!' But here he had to stop, as his joke was so evidently ill received, that even 'Old Dunderhead' could carry it no further. Mr Harris had given him a fiery glance or two, and was secretly stamping under the table; Mr Mainwaring was crimson to the brow with anger and confusion; Mr Darcy—for he too was one of the listeners—had turned deadly pale.

Later in the evening, when some of the officers were smoking on deck, while others remained in the ward-room, Mr Darcy took an opportunity of saying a few words in private to Mr Harris. He began in a measured voice that was full of

suppressed passion: 'I did not know, Mr Harris, that you were in the habit of walking with the Misses Fitzwilliam?'

Mr Harris turned round, and flashed an angry answer upon him. 'Of all men living,' he exclaimed, 'you have the least right to ask or to care!'

A momentary crimson passed over Mr Darcy's face, and left him again pale as ashes. 'I know my own private affairs,' he said in a deep tone of self-compelled calmness, 'and do not need to be reminded of them by any one.'

'They sometimes seem marvellously to escape your memory,' Mr Harris sneered angrily.

This was too much for Evelyn Darcy's self-control. He started, as if stung, and drew himself up to his full height. 'Do you mean to insult me?' he exclaimed indignantly.

'I do not mean to insult you,' replied Mr Harris in a calmer tone, remembering, hot as he was, that an open quarrel had better be avoided; 'but I mean to say that silence may cease to be a point of honour with me.'

'I believe I can judge of my own honour,' muttered Mr Darcy, as he turned away from him.

He turned away from him a miserable man, for he could no longer conceal from himself that he cared for Maud Fitzwilliam, not as a 'pleasant acquaintance,' but as the only thing in life worth living for.

Three whole days went by, during which no one from the *Royal Edward* appeared at Fern Villa, and the Misses Fitzwilliam did not know what to think of it. The good ship might have gone down at her moorings, 'with all her crew complete,' like the *Royal George*, for anything they saw or heard of her officers; but there she was, riding securely in the bay, with her taper masts and black metallic hull, looking a great deal more like mischief than misfortune. There was some intelligible reason for Mr Mainwaring and Mr Harris staying away, but what had become of Mr Darcy? His sketching-day came, and they waited in for him all day; but he neither came nor sent, and his conduct seemed perfectly inexplicable. It was on Monday they had taken that walk, so fatal to the peace of mind of the party; and at last, on Friday, Mr Harris made a reappearance, as smiling, as bright-eyed, as merry as ever, with no allusion to what had passed in his words, and no trace of it in his manner. He had been a voluntary exile from Fern Villa for one entire day off duty, involving the best part of a week, and had found it excessively slow being dignified; so he had thought to himself: 'She said we should be as good friends as ever, and, by Jove! I don't see why we shouldn't.' Then he came—the same joyous Harry Harris who had lost his heart to Maud—the same, but with a difference—for now all his attentions were devoted to Clara; and Clara was not ill-pleased. She had given up Mr Mainwaring, and Mr Mainwaring, it seemed, had given her up. Mr Harris was very pleasant, and she did not see why she should snub him.

Nearly a week passed, and Maud grew more perplexed and unhappy every day. What did Mr Darcy mean by cutting them in this way? Was he offended, or was he ill? She would not condescend to ask a question about him, but she thought of him incessantly; and I am disposed to think that he was not less unhappy, and perhaps with better reason, than she was. Then, one Wednesday evening, news came to the ship that

they were to sail for Spithead to pay off, the following Friday. To Arthur Mainwaring and Evelyn Darcy, this news was a shutting out of all hope; for hard as it would be to part under any circumstances, to part without a kind word or a fond look from those whose remembrance they prized almost more than life itself, they felt to be intolerably bitter.

On Thursday morning, the *Times* was, as usual, laid on the ward-room table, and Mr Harris was the first to take it up. Hardly had he glanced at it, when he uttered a long low whistle, and threw the paper across to Mr Darcy, pointing to a particular paragraph, and muttering something in Italian about '*matrimonio*' and '*promessa sposa*.'

As Mr Darcy read, everything in the room seemed to swim round and round; Mr Dunder and the first-lieutenant, Mr Harris and Mr Mainwaring, the breakfast-table and the skylight, the bulk-heads and the cabin-doors, seemed to melt into one confused mass before his eyes, and but for the stern necessity for concealing his emotions before so many unsympathising spectators, he could hardly have kept up the usual appearance of conventional indifference. But long habits of self-restraint came to his assistance; and after a few minutes, during which his downcast eyes and compressed lips alone shewed that any unusual feeling was stirring him, he was able to look Mr Harris calmly in the face, as he handed him back the *Times*, and to answer his keen glance of mockery with a grave nod.

The announcement which had touched him so deeply was as follows: 'On the 15th inst., at the Chapel of the British Consulate, and the Church of St Teresa, Naples, Henry, eldest son of Sir Laurence Willoughby, of Willoughby Park, Herts, Bart., to Giulia, only daughter of the late Alessandro, Conte di Pesera.'

Three years before, when Mr Darcy and Mr Harris were in the Mediterranean, the *Terrific* had been anchored for a month in the Bay of Naples; only for one month, and yet the time was long enough for Evelyn Darcy, then an imaginative boy of twenty, to fall desperately in love with Giulia Pesera, a beautiful Italian girl of noble family, but somewhat reduced circumstances, to whom an accident had introduced him. He thought himself the happiest man in the world when she promised to become his wife, though, of course, the engagement should necessarily be a long one, especially as Mr Darcy was a minor, under his father's will, until he reached the age of twenty-five. Five years' constancy not only seemed to him possible, but change, though he lived to the age of Methuselah, appeared out of the question. But the hour of parting came, and they met for the last time in the gardens of the Villa Reale. In that perfumed air, under the fair southern sky, the time slipped away so quickly, that it was absolutely necessary they should part before many minutes seemed to have elapsed. Then Giulia drew forth an exquisite miniature of herself, set in pearls, and with a tender glance of her long languid eyes, and a pathetic '*Non mi scordar*,' she put it into Mr Darcy's hands. He pressed it fervently to his lips, and was uttering vows of eternal constancy, when a rustling sound was heard. Antonietta whispered hurriedly: '*Badate; ecco un signore!*' and emerging from some orange-trees which concealed a turn in the path, Mr Harris stood before them. His merry eyes flashed a plea-

sant smile as he passed on; and in another moment Mr Darcy had said a few hasty words of farewell to his dark-eyed *fiancée*, and overtaken him.

'You know my secret now,' he exclaimed, 'and I trust to you to keep it. She is the dearest and best girl in the world, and she has promised to be my wife.'

Though unusual, it was at that time not impossible for the two subalterns to be on shore together, as they had a married captain of marines in the *Terrific*, who shewed them indulgence on an occasion, and thus it had happened that Mr Harris was in Mr Darcy's confidence. But the secret, instead of being a bond of union between them, proved rather a source of distrust and estrangement; for a confidant, not of one's own choosing, is the last person to develop into a friend. Mr Darcy felt the never-ending *gêne* of being thrown into constant intercourse with one who knew more of him than he would have chosen to reveal, and to whom, as he felt instinctively, the revelation was but a disclosure of folly. Their dispositions, naturally opposite, grew daily more and more antagonistic, and Mr Harris's keen good sense degenerated into cynicism, when contrasted with the hidden romance of Evelyn Darcy's more ardent temperament. So they had parted without regret on the paying off of the *Terrific*, and met without pleasure, when an accident again brought them together in the *Royal Edward*.

And during these three years, how had it fared with the constancy of the lovers? It is not in human nature to be faithful for ever to the absent or the dead, and this lesson Mr Darcy learned by experience that was very bitter to him. He had done his best—he had kept out of society lest her image should be weakened in his mind; he had written and thought of her constantly, and yet he felt, with a cold chill of disappointment, that his love for his Giulia was oozing out at the tips of his fingers, and that he could not keep it from flying, do what he would. Then he had met Maud Fitzwilliam, and taken pleasure in seeing and being with her, without any thought at all on the subject, until the morning of the picnic at Ribbruff, when one of Giulia's letters—now few and far between—had arrived. This compelled him to reflect upon his position, and he remained on board, as we have seen, in perplexity and self-torment as to his real feelings. However, these doubts again passed away, and everything went on as before, until that fatal day of the walk to the ferny brook-side, when Mr Dunder's *mal-à-propos* speech at mess had raised such a storm of jealousy within him that he could no longer conceal from himself that he was faithless to his Italian love; and nothing remained for him but to see Maud no more, and to compel, if he could, his allegiance back to where it was due. But this effort at least was spared him; for three weeks after she wrote her last letter to Evelyn Darcy, Giulia Pesera married the English baronet's heir, and thus finally cut the knot, perhaps guessing that she did her first lover no grievous wrong by so doing.

Before Mr Harris left the ship (for it was his day off duty), Mr Darcy came up to him, and he now scarcely attempted to conceal his agitation. 'Can you let me have an hour or two on shore to-day?' he said, looking at him eagerly.

'Doesn't look like it,' was the careless reply: 'the ship sails to-morrow.'

'I know, I know,' Mr Darcy went on, in a voice

that trembled with anxiety; 'but I have urgent business.'

'I have business too,' answered Mr Harris unmoved.

'But my business,' exclaimed the other passionately, 'is almost of life and death to me.'

There was an inexorable light, however, in Mr Harris's keen eyes. 'I expect mine is just as much of life and death as yours,' he said coolly, and went on, turning on his heel. 'But I must be off; the boat is alongside.' Then he looked back, and added with a twinkling eye and a curl of his yellow moustache: 'I say, try pen and ink; 'twill do just as well.'

He went; and Evelyn Darcy was left a prisoner in the ship, chafing impatiently at the thought that now he must go, leaving Maud to think of him unkindly, if at all, when with a clear conscience he could look in her face, and tell her the story of his love.

Mr Harris, when he announced at Fern Villa that the *Royal Edward* was to sail next day, had at least the satisfaction of creating a sensation. Maud had secretly nourished hopes that sooner or later Mr Darcy would come back, and explain the sudden and silent cessation of his visits. Clara fully expected that, little as she deserved it, Arthur would come to see her, and say a parting word before he left; and every time the door opened, she felt her heart give a little leap of expectation; but the day passed on, there was no sign of him, and her anxiety changed gradually to anger.

All this time, Mr Harris was assiduous in his attentions; during that whole day, he never left her side; and before he went, he made her a proposal, which she, in her pique and anger at Arthur's absence, actually accepted—accepted, indeed, in a doubtful, coquettish sort of way, but still she said 'Yes,' and not 'No.'

Next morning (Friday) about eleven o'clock, Maud was standing sad and listless at the drawing-room window, when a tall figure emerged from the laurel-bushes of the avenue, and she saw in a moment, with a thrill of delight, that it was Mr Darcy. He came in smiling, though agitated. Maud thought he might have apologised for his absence, and need not have looked so happy when he was going away; but he did not leave her long in doubt about his feelings, for while Mrs Brent and Clara were talking at one end of the room, he drew her quietly into the recess of a window, and there, in low, passionate tones, poured forth his tale, and asked her to take Giulia Pescara's place. Nor did she disdain to do so.

But what was Clara thinking of? Was she happy in what she had done? She was truly miserable: she almost hated Mr Harris for having drawn her into accepting him; and she longed more and more just to see Arthur even for one moment, if it were only to know that he was angry with her. Maud and Mr Darcy had gone out to walk in the garden; Mrs Brent was nominally with them, but really engaged in trying to keep the children from eating unripe apples, so that Clara was left alone in the drawing-room. She sat crouching in the corner of a sofa, her face buried in her hands, and was so lost in bitter thoughts, that she did not hear the door open, and a footstep approach; nor even when somebody came and stood patiently beside her, did she raise her eyes for some minutes. When she at length did so, and saw who it was, she uttered a subdued cry, and

sprang up, with burning cheeks, and a keen sense of self-reproach at her heart. 'Arthur, forgive me!' she exclaimed in a low voice.

He comforted her tenderly; and then they sat down, both supremely delighted to be friends once more. Nevertheless, it was not without a start of surprise that Arthur heard Mr Harris's name in connection with her, and a cloud gathered on his brow when she confessed the whole of her iniquity. 'But, Arthur dear,' she pleaded, 'you know I did not half mean it; I was only vexed with you. Won't you tell him that I did not mean it?'

He promised; and even that was forgiven. In a couple of hours more, those on board the *Royal Edward* had caught their last glimpse of the sunny terraces of Brighthaven, as the headlands outside closed their arms upon the friendly harbour.

It was not without considerable embarrassment that Arthur Mainwaring approached the subject of Miss Fitzwilliam's intentions with Mr Harris; but the latter put an end to all awkwardness by shaking his rival cordially by the hand, and saying in a voice that had no trace of blighted love in it: 'All right, old fellow! I wish you joy. I knew very well how it was all the time, and I tell you what it is: I'd rather have the fun of cutting out any other fellow than you, Mainwaring. Now, if it was Darcy, I shouldn't mind a bit.'

Mr Mainwaring not only got his step when the ship paid off, but was appointed Inspecting Commander of Coastguards as well, so that his marriage with Clara Fitzwilliam took place without delay, and was all that a marriage should be. Mr Darcy and Maud were best-man and first-bride-maid on the occasion; and though the second wedding has not come off yet, I do not think there is any danger of the engagement terminating so disastrously as Mr Darcy's first, for the wedding-day is fixed for his twenty-fifth birthday, when he comes in for his property, a very handsome one, in Devonshire.

Mr Harris is at present stationed at Chatham, and I have reason to think is not ill-pleased that his proposals at Brighthaven were not more fortunate, since he finds it far jollier in barracks without a wife, especially as his purse is not a deep one.

HEART'S-EASE.

A SIMPLE flower for such a magic name.

The leaves of royal purple, matched with yellow;

Yielding no perfume, humbled, hardy, wild,

Yet with a fame not Amaranth can follow.

No opiate sleep is treasured in its stem,

No precious balsam with enchanted powers;

It bears no scent of Eden in its buds,

Nor gathers hues from rainbow-coloured showers.

It lends no brighter glory to the spring;

It casts no solace o'er the winter-snow;

But all unheeded 'mid the statelier growths,

Its triple blossoms innocently grow.

That gives its value, which its name implies.

Dives would pour his gold in streaming floods

To buy a leaflet; and one-half the world

Would life-long search for it through fields and woods.

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